Having thus described the preferred embodiment, the invention is now claimed to be:

1.   A method for ordering parts for a machine being serviced within an e-commerce environment, the method comprising:

transmitting diagnostic data from a local computing device at the machine to a host computing device via a network;

5   identifying a part to be replaced within the machine as a function of the diagnostic data;

determining a part identifier as a function of the part and retrofit information stored on the host computing device; and

transmitting the part identifier from the host computing device to an

10   order processing device.

2.   The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, further including:

if the part is included as a non-replaceable component in a replaceable sub-assembly within the machine, the identifying step including:

5   identifying the part as the sub-assembly; and

if the part is a replaceable component within the machine, the identifying step including:

identifying the part as the component.

3.   The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, further including:

determining other parts within the machine to be replaced as a function of the part identifier.

4. The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, further including:

transmitting an identifier of the machine from the local computing device to a host computing device via the network, the part identifier and the retrofit information being identified as a function of the machine identifier.

5. The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, wherein the local computing device is a discrete unit from the machine, the method further including:

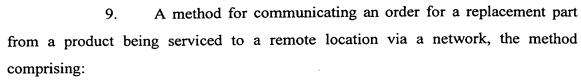connecting the local computing device to the machine via a communication link.

6. The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, further including:

storing the diagnostic data within the local computing device.

7. The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, further including:

transmitting a confirmation to the local computing device that the part identifier has been transmitted to the order processing device.

8. The method for ordering parts as set forth in claim 1, wherein the identifying step includes:

viewing a graphical representation of the machine via a display device; and

zooming-in the graphical representation, via a pointing device.

9.   A method for communicating an order for a replacement part from a product being serviced to a remote location via a network, the method comprising:

transmitting diagnostic data for the product from a local processing unit to a central processing unit via the network;

processing the diagnostic data at the central processing unit for determining if one of a plurality of parts included in the machine is to be replaced;

identifying an original part number for the part to be replaced;

determining the replacement part, as a function of the original part number and retrofit information, which substitutes for the part to be replaced; and

ordering the replacement part.

10.   The method for communicating an order for a replacement part as set forth in claim 9, further including:

transmitting a confirmation, which indicates that the replacement part has been ordered, from the central processing unit to the local processing unit.

11.   The method for communicating an order for a replacement part as set forth in claim 9, further including:

producing the diagnostic data within the local processing unit.

12.   The method for communicating an order for a replacement part as set forth in claim 9, further including:

maintaining the retrofit information on the central processing unit.

13.   The method for communicating an order for a replacement part as set forth in claim 9, wherein the identifying step includes:

selecting the part from an illustration of the product displayed on a monitor.

14. The method for communicating an order for a replacement part as set forth in claim 13, wherein the selecting step includes:

selecting successively detailed illustrations of the product; and

selecting the part from one of the illustrations having a predetermined

5 level of detail.

15. A system for ordering parts for a machine, comprising:

means for transmitting diagnostic data from a local computing device at the machine to a remote host computing device via a network;

means for identifying a part to be replaced within the machine as a

5 function of the diagnostic data which is processed by the host computing device;

a storage device communicating with the host computing device for storing retrofit information; and

a processor within the host computing device for ensuring the part is current in accordance with the retrofit information, the processor identifying the part

10 as an updated part if the part is not current and transmitting an order for the part from the host computing device to an order processing center.

16. The system for ordering parts as set forth in claim 15, wherein:

if the part is included as a non-replaceable component in a replaceable sub-assembly within the machine, the part being identified as the sub-assembly; and

if the part is a replaceable component within the machine, the part

5 being identified as the component.

17. The system for ordering parts as set forth in claim 15, wherein:

determining additional parts in the machine to be replaced as a function of the part identified to be replaced.

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18. The system for ordering parts as set forth in claim 15, wherein:

an identifier of the machine is transmitted from the local computing device to a host computing device via the network, the part and the retrofit information being identified as a function of the machine identifier.

19. The system for ordering parts as set forth in claim 15, further including:

a communication link connecting the local computing device to the machine; and

5

a storage device within the local computing device for storing the diagnostic data.

20. The system for ordering parts as set forth in claim 15, wherein the means for identifying includes:

a display device for illustrating a graphical representation of the machine; and

5

a pointing device for a) zooming the graphical representation until the part is magnified to a predetermined threshold and b) selecting the part.